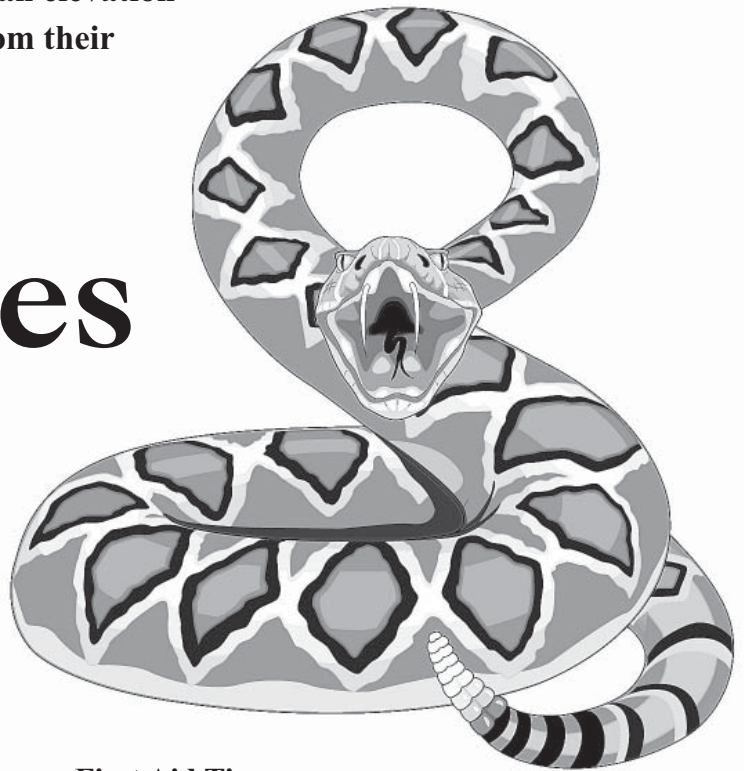


Rattlesnakes are common in California up to an elevation of about 11,000 feet. In spring they emerge from their dens where they have been hibernating. All rattlesnakes will bite, including the young, and are poisonous.

# Rattlesnakes

The following precautions are recommended to avoid being bitten by rattlesnakes:

1. When outdoors, look carefully where you walk, play, sit or lie down to relax. Rattlesnakes can be found under logs, among tall grasses or underbrush.
2. Rattlesnakes seek shade during hot days. Look first when going into shady areas. They also may be under large rocks or in outbuildings.
3. Use a bright flashlight when walking at night. Snakes are active at night when it is cool. If you are camping, gather firewood before dark.
4. Carefully check your sleeping bag at night.
5. Rats and mice serve as readily available food for rattlesnakes. Keep yards clean by clearing away debris where rats could breed.
6. Rattlesnakes may or may not rattle when a person gets too close to them. **DO NOT PANIC.** Stand still and try to determine its location. Back away slowly. Snakes can lunge or “make a strike” at their intended victim at a distance equivalent to one-half or one-third of its body length. When given a chance, snakes may choose to retreat.
7. Most snake bites on humans are on the legs or lower legs. It is best to wear long pants, thick socks and boots when walking or working in grassy or bushy fields and yards.
8. If you see a *dead* rattlesnake, stay away from it!
9. **Do not** put hands into holes on the ground, such as gopher holes, hollow of trees or logs, or other openings where rattlesnakes may be hiding.
10. **Do not** reach out where you cannot see, such as a rocky ledge above your head. There may be a rattlesnake there.



## First Aid Tips

If bitten, **seek medical treatment immediately!** Children and elderly people are particularly at risk. Calm and reassure the victim to help keep heart rate low.

Wash the wound and immobilize the injured area, keeping it lower than the heart if possible.

If possible, carry the victim who must be taken to a medical facility or have him walk slowly.

If bite is on hand or arm, remove watches, rings or tight clothing. Place arm in a sling and keep fingers straight.

If you are in a remote area and cannot get professional medical care within 30 minutes, carry a snakebite kit and suction the wound according to the directions in the kit.

## DO NOT:

- apply ice to a snakebite.
- cut the wound or apply a tourniquet or use electric shock.
- take aspirin or ibuprofen.



County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health  
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**VECTOR CONTROL PROGRAM**

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